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RIGHT OF REPLY
BY THE INDONESIAN OBSERVER DELEGATION
UNDER ITEM 22
GENEVA, FEBRUARY 1989

Mr. Chairman,

I have asked for the floor to respond to ~~the~~ a reference made concerning ~~(the~~ so-called) "Lampung Incident".

^ what the NGO concerned called as the

Allow me at the outset, Mr. Chairman to recall that the Republic of Indonesia is a pluralistic multi-racial society composed of hundreds of ethnic groups. It is understandable that we have hundreds of dialects, different traditions and 5 official religions. The first principle of our five-point philosophy is the belief in one, supreme God. While on the one hand, the Government of Indonesia respects, preserves and promotes these traditional values and customs, it is also true that the Government is firmly committed to unifying these diverse groupings into one national entity, the Republic of Indonesia for the benefit of all its citizens. This can be evidenced by the Indonesian national ~~philosophy~~ ideology, the Pancasila and the country's national motto "Unity in Diversity" which draws upon the strengths of Indonesia's different groupings in promoting national harmony and tolerance. The essence of this philosophy is exactly religious tolerance.

It is undeniable that such a sensitive and complex task is not easy and from time to time, certain individuals who adhere to their traditional way of life or practices, may feel unhappy in light of the changing circumstances they find themselves in as a result of development efforts and progress. The Government ~~of the Republic of Indonesia~~ has consistently followed the path of dialogue and consultation in dealing with this question in order that different points of views can be accommodated whenever possible.

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It is however, ludicrous to pretend that the Government is capable of taking action against Muslims because of their religious beliefs. As is well known, Indonesia's population of around 180 million is predominantly Muslim, with freedom of religion for all faiths guaranteed by the State Constitution. The Government has never prohibited rites and sermons of any of the recognized religions in whatever form.

Quite another matter however, is the abuse of religion by a small number of people acting irresponsibly and who are not mature in their knowledge of Islam. This has been the case with the so-called "Lampung Incident" where certain individuals have misused religion for their own purposes in order to produce social unrest. It is understandable that the Government of Indonesia with a responsibility towards all of its citizens must hence take the necessary steps in order to ensure that the rights of the majority are not placed in jeopardy by the irresponsible action of a very small band of individuals. In the so-called Lampung Incident, those involved deliberately set out to arouse public opinion against the Government and the national ~~ideology~~ philosophy through the use of violence and force in the form of molotov cocktails, poisonous arrows and swords. Their action had nothing whatsoever to do with the promotion of Islam, as was confirmed by Mr. Hasan Basri, Chairman of the Indonesia Ulamas Council, who noted that the group had harassed and killed innocent people in contradiction to the teachings of Islam.

It should moreover be noted that the press has inaccurately and erroneously reported the number of persons involved in this affair, which was essentially a local issue.

Nor is it reasonable to attempt to link this isolated incident to the issue of transmigration. The policy of transmigration has been used on previous occasions to attack ~~the Government's~~ my Government's efforts to develop the country and to raise living standards. Far from being contrary to the interests of the local population, transmigration provides positive economic benefits to all regions of the country through the creation of employment opportunities, the alleviation of poverty and by increasing

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food production and per capita income in the less developed regions. In attempting to address the problem of uneven population distribution and promoting economic development, this programme takes great care to preserve the various pluralistic characteristics of the regions within the framework of the national identity, as well as the need for environmental protection.

~~After~~ Having said this, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the indulgence of this meeting to allow me to read the chronology of events so that the members of the Commission would know what has actually happened.

1. On 1 February 1989, the Head of Talangsari Village, district of Way Jepara, province of Lampung informed Capt. Soetiman, the District Military Officer, of the existence of a number of suspicious persons calling themselves "Mujahidin Fisabilillah Commando" in his village. Their activities included among other things, the delivery of provocative speeches to arouse the public to act against the Government. They armed themselves with molotov cocktails, swords and poisonous arrows.

2. On 4 February, the local authorities invited Mr. Anwar, the self-styled leader of the group to come and discuss the nature of his group's activities. Mr. Anwar however, ignored this invitation and demanded instead that the local authorities come to their hideout.

3. As part of their method to place the population concerned under their control, this group forbade the local population to carry out their turn of village night watch. The followers of Anwar took upon themselves those responsibilities normally carried out by the villagers on a rotational basis.

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4. On 5 February, 5 followers of the group were arrested by the local authorities after the discovery of poisonous arrows and swords in their possession and after an indication of suspicious preparations to use these weapons to disturb security.

5. On 6 February, the representatives of the local authorities agreed to come to their hideout to discuss peacefully their concerns. However, the visitors were attacked with poisonous arrows, swords etc. Capt. Soetiman who was in the visiting group died from the attack. The group refused to hand over the body of Capt. Soetiman.

6. On 7 February, elements of the provincial law enforcement units which had tried to retrieve Capt. Soetiman's body were met with fierce attack by the group armed with poisonous arrows and swords. Victims : 33 died, including Anwar himself and his followers. In addition, 19 members of the group were arrested.

7. In a separate incident on 6 February, small bands of Anwar's group, headed by a person called Fadillah raided isolated police posts to search for arms. On 7 February they attacked Forest Police of Mount Badak, killing Sergeant Major Sudargo and Sergeant Arif Sembiring and took possession of 2 pistols. Moreover, they killed the Head of Sidoredjo Village, Santosa Arifin, and that night took possession of a public transport vehicle, killing the driver, wounding his assistant and killing a soldier, Budi Waluyo, all of whom were in the car. At 04.00 ~~hrs~~ on 8 February, the law enforcement units arrested 8 persons in the village of Sukadana. 12 others were also arrested, but 3 were soon released.

8. The local authorities estimated that the followers of Anwar amount to approximately 200 - 250.

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Mr. Chairman,

In concluding I would like to say :

1. Local authorities managed to quickly restore order. Night curfew was deemed to be unnecessary. It is unquestionably an incident of local character, involving a small group.

2. The so-called "Mujahidin Fisabilillah Commando" was a small band of fanatical individuals having no connection whatsoever with the existing political parties and religious groups in the country. Moreover, there was no evidence of any foreign involvement in the incident.

3. The group created disturbances by misusing religion for their own interests. Mr Hasan Basri, Chairman of Indonesian Ulamas Council (MUI), stressed that the incident had nothing to do with Islam. The group misused the Islamic term "Mujahidin Fisabilillah" (Allah's Way Fighters), but their actions were contrary to the teachings of Islam. The group, according to Hasan Basri, harassed and killed innocent people in contradiction to the teachings of Islam.

4. Those responsible for the incident will be brought to court for trial. Investigation is under way and those responsible will be brought to trial. And the trial will be open.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation volunteers this information in the hope that those who enquired about this incident are now aware of the true situation and have not been misled by incomplete or inaccurate information.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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